



News Release

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State approves 26 drinking water projects for low-interest loans

Projects include \$8.6 million for Port Townsend water treatment plant

OLYMPIA — Port Townsend will soon have an advanced water treatment system to better protect residents from waterborne disease. The \$8.6 million loan from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund is among more than two dozen projects recently approved in Washington.

The city, which draws its water from the Big Quilcene and Little Quilcene rivers, must meet strict treatment standards because rivers, streams, and lakes are more vulnerable to pollution than wells. The new ultraviolet treatment system is designed to kill germs like *Cryptosporidium*, which causes severe intestinal illness.

“Our water quality is good today, but we need to prepare for tomorrow,” said Dave Timmons, Port Townsend’s city manager. “This new treatment will enable us to add an extra layer of safety without adding chemicals to the water. This is a natural treatment process that uses the disinfection power of the sun’s ultraviolet rays.”

The project, which carries a low 1.5 percent interest rate, is one of [26 drinking water projects](#) statewide approved for \$84.2 million in loans by the state Public Works Board. The revolving fund is a federal/state program that provides loans with interest rates ranging from 1 to 1.5 percent to public water systems for capital improvements that protect public health.

The 26 communities will get the loans four to six months earlier than in past years, so they can start construction sooner. The state Departments of Health and Commerce, and the Public Works Board – the agencies responsible for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund – found a way to speed approvals for applicants with low financial risk. Those projects can move forward, while the agencies help other applicants whose ability to repay loans is less certain.

“This is one of our most effective programs to help communities make their drinking water safer and protect the health of families,” said Denise Clifford, director of the Department of Health’s Office of Drinking Water. “We’re helping communities get low-interest loans rapidly for major construction projects. That protects public health while helping support jobs at a time when they’re badly needed.”

Port Townsend expects to begin construction next year and have its new ultraviolet treatment system up and running in 2014.

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